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ABSTRACT

This chapter considers ways in which college or university instructional development centers can enhance their effectiveness in order to insure their "survival" in the face of budgetary restraints and administrative scrutiny. It is suggested that in order to do so, a center must become an integral part of the institution, must be productive, and must establish its own credibility. Six recommendations are made for implementing this strategy: (1) build in a content check; (2) take care of how the products look; (3) build in evaluation from the beginning; (4) develop a reputation for support, friendliness, and professionalism; (5) find out what is working and what isn't for other institutions and agencies; and (6) work with faculty members who have the necessary content expertise, the respect of their peers, and who care about teaching and instruction. "Planning for the Evaluation of Programs and Agencies," an instrument developed for the evaluation of an instructional development agency, is appended. (Author/EW)

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B. PRACTICAL APPROACHES

Chapter 7

A Matter of Survival

Robert M. Diamond

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

What determines whether or not an instructional development center will survive budget cuts and administration scrutiny? How can such a center guarantee its effectiveness in the eyes of those who will judge it? The following chapter addresses these questions, and provides an instrument for use in assessing survivability directly.

The years ahead will not be easy ones for colleges and universities. Inflation will continue, and energy and legal costs will continue to consume a large proportion of total operational budgets. For many there will be a decline in overall enrollment. As a result, support agencies such as instructional development centers will find themselves constantly fighting for their share of scarce resources and, in some instances, for survival.

Offices of this type are particularly vulnerable in times of fiscal stress for several reasons. First, they are not a traditional part of "the university"; they do not have the historical base associated with the various academic departments, the library and the computing center. Second, since units may not have direct contact with the total academic community, they are often not perceived by the faculty and by administrators as vital to the institution and its survival; and, third, as easily-identified units with discreet budgets, they are extremely accessible to a budget committee's axe, or an administrator's "trade-off." It is not surprising that many agency heads tend to wish that other units could receive the same attention and evaluation on a yearly basis that their centers attract.

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SHOULD INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS SURVIVE?

Yes....but. A center should survive if it is having a significant and positive impact upon the institution. If the work of the agency helps improve instruction, if its efforts have a direct and positive effect upon attrition and admissions, if the unit helps the college or university make more effective use of its resources...then the agency is crucial to that institution and should be maintained and, perhaps, even expanded. If, however, its impact is minimal and its worth to the institution is in doubt, the unit should not and most likely will not survive. The time is rapidly coming when colleges and universities will no longer be able to maintain inefficient and non-contributing centers and departments. A growing number of institutions have already cut academic programs, closed out areas of specialization, released tenured faculty, and, in some instances, eliminated degree programs.

Instructional development centers will not survive without fighting for their program. The staff of these agencies can no longer assume that because they represent "truth" and "right" their

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existence is guaranteed. Unless a center builds and works systematically for its survival, its future may be far shorter than its staff might anticipate. Sooner or later every campus is going to take a hard look at how each penny is spent. And, when that day comes, if it hasn't already, the instructional development agency must be prepared.

PREPARING FOR THE INEVITABLE

An instructional development unit can implement a series of actions that will help it survive hard fiscal scrutiny. Some actions are directed at improving its impact and operational effectiveness, while others are more political in nature. Both areas are, however, extremely important. The following recommendations are based upon observations, direct experience, and conversations with administrators, faculty members, and instructional development practitioners.

I. The Unit Must Become An Integral Part of the Institution

This is done in many ways. It means having staff of the agency serve as regular members of key academic and administrative committees. It means obtaining, if at all possible, academic appointments for professional staff members and having them viewed by other faculty members as effective teachers. (At the same time, it is important **not** to let these individuals become so busy with teaching, advising, and adacemic departmental work that their prime functions in development and evaluation suffer.) It is a major responsibility of the director of the agency to facilitate these types of appointments. They rarely occur unless they are actively sought.

For the center to be perceived as important, it requires selecting projects that are important to the individual departments and to the institution. It means becoming a resource to faculty members as they develop grant proposals, particularly those related to course and curriculum development or that include evaluation components. In short, it requires getting involved, being supportive, becoming utilized, and getting known. Each of these steps helps the agency to become recognized as an **integral** part of the institution.

II. The Unit Must Be Productive

While an attempt must be made to never turn down a faculty member or department seeking help, major resources must be spent in those areas in which impact can be the greatest. There is little doubt that supporting a wide range of small projects (single lesson redesigns, media production) can make quite a few friends for the unit. While activities of this type may be undertaken to open doors and lead to more significant projects, this approach alone rarely has major impact upon the course itself, the instructor, or, most important, the student. For agency survival, emphasis must be placed upon designing and evaluating whole courses or curricula, particularly in those areas where either problems exist or enrollment increases are anticipated.

The unit must also be seen as effective and as having a successful track record. If support for a project does not exist within the key departments, if quality faculty members are not willing to become involved, if key administrators do not feel that the project is important...don't get involved. There is too much to lose, and the chances of success are far too small. One faculty member on the "bandwagon" can often do more harm than good, particularly if, as is often the case, the individual is not respected by her or his peers. In addition, if the course or program is tied to a single individual, it is totally vulnerable should that person leave, be promoted, or be given another assignment. For this reason alone, an effort should be made to involve faculty teams in developmental projects.

III. Establish Credibility for What You Do

This process requires several steps. First, a procedure must be established to identify what criteria the various publics you serve will use to measure the success of the project and the agency as a whole (Note 1). It must be remembered that different groups (administrators, the faculty, students) will be looking for different things in a project, and the agency must be sensitive to these variations. An adminsitrator, for example, may be particularly interested in impact upon registration or attrition, while the department will be looking at how the new program is perceived by the faculty members and graduate students involved in its teaching. Second, an evaluation scheme must be built into every project. The evaluation process must be designed to serve two purposes: to provide data essential to the design, implementation, and revision process and to generate data that can be used effectively, if appropriate, for dissemination purposes. Finally, the results of the project should be reported to those who are involved and those who need to know what happened. Effective communication is a key element to agency survival, and all too often it has been left to chance. By knowing what criteria an individual will use to judge the success of a project and her/his decision-making style, you know what type of data to report. There have been many examples in which a center spent its time in those activities that were unimportant in the eyes of both the faculty and the administrators. It is no wonder that many of these units are no longer in operation. It is vitally important that key administrators and academic committees on a campus are involved in setting the operational goals of the agency and are included in the dissemination procedures. This reporting may be informal at times, through meetings and casual conversation. It may also include formal reports and documents. But it must take place. However, this does not happen by chance.

IV. What You Do, Do Well

While the need for a quality product is obvious, it is unfortunate that this is not always the result. This requires not only the careful selection of staff and of projects, (Note 2) but also a concern with quality within every phase of the project. This can be helped by the following:

(a) Build in a content check. Use, if the key content specialist(s) will agree, expertise in the field to review the design of the course and program as it evolves and the content of the materials as they are being produced.

(b) Take care of how the products look. First impressions do count. Neat and well-done graphics, quality typing, and good proofreading are essential. No matter how good the content is, if the reports look messy, if the materials give the appearance of "quick and dirty" production, their effectiveness will be diminished. It is better to produce simple materials that work and have a quality look to them than to generate expensive and complex products that are poorly produced and instructionally questionable.

(c) Build in evaluation from the beginning. Plan to answer the questions that will be asked, collect the necessary base data (Note 3) and make sure that all reports that will be produced can be understood by their intended audiences. Avoid jargon.

(d) Develop a reputation for support, friendliness, and professionalism. How the center looks (its space, layout and design, how people are greeted when they arrive, how efficient it is in day-to-day activities) goes a long way in helping develop a positive image. How phones are answered, how conscientiously deadlines are met, and the overall atmosphere of the offices are all contributing factors.

(e) Don't work in isolation: learn from other institutions, find out what other agencies are doing, what is working and what isn't. Make it your business to separate what is said and reported from what may exist. When you can use effective units or successful techniques that were developed elsewhere, do so. It saves time and money. Keep your professional staff active in national and regional associations...for many, these conferences, workshops, and consultancies serve as their "in-service" training programs. Facilitate and reward professional growth.

(f) Select your faculty with care. Whenever possible, work with faculty members who have the content expertise you need, the respect of their peers, and who "give a damn" about teaching and instruction. You not only are known by the company you keep, **but,** unless you work with top quality faculty members or content experts, you cannot have top quality products.

A FINAL WORD

In the long run, the survival of an instructional development agency will depend upon what is done, how well it is done, and how important these activities are perceived to be **for** the instruction and **to** the faculty, the students and key administrators. Unfortunately, it is somewhat idealistic to always expect that all decisions will be rational and based upon a comprehensive study of facts and priorities. Logic will not always prevail, and, along the way, some very poor decisions can be expected. With careful planning, however, the chance of this occurring can be dramatically reduced. We can plan for survival.

APPENDIX

Guidelines For the Administration, Analysis, and Interpretation of the Planning for the Evaluation of Programs and Agencies Questionnaire (PEPA).

by

Robert M. Diamond

and

Edward F. Kelly

The Planning for the Evaluation of Programs and Agencies questionnaire (PEPA) is designed as part of a systematic process to assist those involved with the administration of academic agencies or departments in selecting the criteria by which the success of that unit will be judged. The recommended procedure for use of PEPA requires that all major groups and individual decision-makers who have responsibilities within or for a specific agency or unit actually participate in the evaluation process. Ideally, the criteria that are established should be agreed to and understood by all.

1. The specific unit or department upon which PEPA is to be focused must be clearly understood by all participants. To avoid confusion, it might help to circle in red in the left-hand column of question #5 the specific unit involved (i.e., faculty development, media services, etc.) or to write the name or department under **Other.** You may also wish to have participants skip questions 1

(Note: Permission is hereby granted for the duplication and use of the Planning for the Evaluation of Program and Agencies questionnaire on college and university campuses.)

through 4 as long as you provide us with this data when you forward the completed set of questionnaires to use for additional analysis.

2. The questionnaire should, depending upon the function and organization of the unit, be completed independently by:

a. The administrator to whom such a program or unit reports.

(If several units are involved in this discussion and they report to the same administrator, the administrator must complete a separate instrument for each unit.)

b. The director or chairperson of the unit.

c. Staff members of the unit.

d. Advisory, Budget or other committees actively involved in unit-related decisions.

e. Individuals directly served by the unit.

f. Funding agency contact - if supported by outside funds.

3. When several groups are involved (committees, staff, etc.) data should be tabulated separately for each group and, if possible, an attempt should be made through discussion to reach preliminary consensus upon priority criteria, both those now in use and others that are desired.

Assuming that time constraints will permit little more than simple tabulation of the frequencies of response to each item and a summary of the number of times particular items were nominated as one of the top five, achieving even a preliminary concensus will be no simple task. Furthermore, PEPA is not composed of 54 independent items. There is some redundancy, and some of the items bear a very close relationship to each other. Consequently, examination of the results may require that additional items and categories be composed that appear to the user group to have face validity and represent criteria as defined in local circumstances.

The two pilot tryouts of PEPA have each shown that users tend to compose their own "new" or additional items in the comments areas. These items are frequently seen as very important by the author. A list of these "new" or additional items should be composed by the facilitator and reported both to the user group and to Syracuse.

4. A meeting should be held to attempt a final consensus upon priority criteria. In attendance should be the administrator to whom the unit reports, the head of the unit, and other appropriate representatives. The facilitator should, using handouts and an overhead projector, first report the summarized data from the various groups and then identify apparent areas of agreement and disagreement. An attempt should be made at this meeting to identify those criteria that will be used and their relative importance.

At this level of use, the identification of "areas of agreement and disagreement" within and between groups on PEPA is based simply upon the **interocular trauma test**; if the result jumps off the summary sheet and hits you between the eyes it's probably worth discussing with the group.

In analyzing the data, you'll notice that the items fall into four general categories: Items 1 through 14, faculty variables; 15 through 25, student variables; 26 through 42, agency variables; and 43 through 54, institutional variables. As soon as a sufficiently large data-base has been developed for PEPA, the factor-analytic composition of the instrument will be examined and appropriate item and scale analyses will be conducted. At that time, we hope to be able to reformat the instrument for machine scoring and thus automate the tabulation and summarization of group responses through a set of simple graphic arrays and descriptive summaries that will identify items and clusters which show either consensus or discrepancy. However, at this time we are far from that level of analysis and reporting. Consequently, users should understand that the instrument is, itself, under development, and that we are eager to receive feedback concerning its strengths and weaknesses.

5. Ultimately, the final criteria that are identified should be published and distributed to all those involved in the decision-making process, for later reference. In addition, attempts should be made to determine how the various criteria can be measured and reported, and a procedure for implementing the evaluation should be adopted.

It is important to stress that, while the procedure will (a) help people identify those criteria which should be used to determine unit success and (b) provide guidelines for determining the effectiveness of a unit in meeting the goals for which it has been established, PEPA, will **not** answer questions about the comparative worth of **different** units. For this decision to be made, judgments are necessary on the comparative value of each of the criteria as they relate to the overall functioning of the institution. While this instrument may provide some data to assist in this deliberation, PEPA is not designed to answer broad questions regarding institutional-wide budget-making when (1) many of the units being evaluated are successfully meeting the charge for which they were established and (2) budget reductions are still deemed necessary.

When the process is completed, we would appreciate your sending the original questionnaires and a summary for each agency to: Dr. Robert M. Diamond, Center for Instructional Development, 115 College Place, Syracuse, New York 13210.

PLANNING FOR THE EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND AGENCIES

Robert M. Diamond and Edward F. Kelly

This questionnaire has been designed to help people who are involved in education focus their thinking about the criteria that are currently employed and others that possibly should be employed during an evaluation of programs and agencies. In order to focus discussion, comparison, and summary, you are asked to: (1) provide some background information, (2) indicate criteria you believe are currently being used to evaluate the program or agency in question, and (3) indicate criteria you believe should be used for this purpose.

I. Institutional Data (if appropriate)

1. Size of Student Body: ( ) under 500 ( ) 501 - 1000 ( ) 1001 - 2500 ( ) 2501 - 5000 ( ) 5001 - 10,000 ( ) Above 10,000

2. Type: A. ( ) Private ( ) Public

3. Structure: B. ( ) K-12 ( ) 4 year college ( ) Junior/community college ( ) Consortial/Regional Responsibility ( ) University

4. Location: State or Province: _____

5. Your Role: Place a check-mark in the cell that best suggests what your role is:

	Your Role				
Faculty Development (In-Service Training					
Course or Curriculum Development					
Media Services					
Library Services					
Library & Media Services					
Computer Services					
Other					
	I am an administrator to whom such a program or agency reports	I am a director of such a program or agency	I am a staff member of such a program or agency	I am a teacher, a member of a committee or an administrator who receives such services	Other

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Go to next page.

II. Listed below are a set of criteria or statements describing characteristics of possible worth. Read each statement carefully and then decide whether or not the characteristic is currently being used to evaluate the specific agency that you are focusing upon in this questionnaire. If you are reasonably sure that a particular criterion is currently in use circle (U) , Used, in the first column. If you are reasonably sure that a characteristic is not in use, circle (NU) , Not Used, in the first column. If you have absolurtely no opinion on the matter, omit any response.

Whether or not you believe a particular criterion is in current use, use the second set of columns to indicate whether you believe it should be used by circling Yes (Y) or No (N) .

	In Use		Should Be Used	
	Used	Not Used	Yes	No
1. Improvement in the design of academic program.	U	NU	Y	N
2. Improvement in faculty ability to design and implement an instructional change.	U	NU	Y	N
3. Faculty support of the program or agency.	U	NU	Y	N
4. Positive impact upon faculty morale	U	NU	Y	N
5. Improved faculty/student relationships	U	NU	Y	N
6. Increased faculty interest and involvement in change	U	NU	Y	N
7. Breadth of faculty involved in effort	U	NU	Y	N
8. Faculty job satisfaction and sense of personal meaningfulness	U	NU	Y	N
9. Impact upon tenure and promotion policies and procedures	U	NU	Y	N
10. Effectiveness of in-service training programs conducted	U	NU	Y	N
11. Increasing frequency of faculty conversations about teaching and learning	U	NU	Y	N
12. Improves faculty teaching through a systematic process using development and evaluation	U	NU	Y	N
13. Faculty show a sense of ownership in agency or program	U	NU	Y	N
14. Agency has helped people become better teachers	U	NU	Y	N

Go to next page.

Feel free to make suggestions on additional criteria or your comments in the space that follows.

		In Use		Should Be Used	
		Used	Not Used	Yes	No
15.	Positive impact upon student learning	U	NU	Y	N
16.	Positive impact upon retention-of-learning rate	U	NU	Y	N
17.	Reduction in student attrition rate	U	NU	Y	N
18.	Improved student attitudes toward course, content, and/or program	U	NU	Y	N
19.	Increased student support of agency or program	U	NU	Y	N
20.	Extent of student involvement in agency or program's efforts	U	NU	Y	N
21.	Increased student enthusiasm for learning	U	NU	Y	N
22.	Success of graduates	U	NU	Y	N
23.	Involves students directly in the activities of designing or redesigning courses and programs	U	NU	Y	N
24.	Improves students' peer relationships	U	NU	Y	N
25.	Increases the frequency of informal interaction between students and faculty	U	NU	Y	N

Feel free to make suggestions on additional criteria or your comments in the space that follows.

26.	Quality of materials produced	U	NU	Y	N
27.	Quality of staff	U	NU	Y	N
28.	Accessibility of staff	U	NU	Y	N
29.	Extent to which the agency has helped faculty identify new roles	U	NU	Y	N

Go to next page.

		In Use		Should Be Used	
		Used	Not Used	Yes	No
30.	Excellence of the national reputation of agency or program	U	NU	Y	N
31.	Frequency of projects or efforts initiated	U	NU	Y	N
32.	Variety of strategies and techniques used	U	NU	Y	N
33.	Evaluation of agency or service by an external group	U	NU	Y	N
34.	Credibility in the off-campus local community	U	NU	Y	N
35.	Sensitivity to the political climate of the institution	U	NU	Y	N
36.	Key agency staff are recognized as good teachers	U	NU	Y	N
37.	Staff are administratively well organized	U	NU	Y	N
38.	Staff have a recognized disciplinary background	U	NU	Y	N
39.	Agency produces reports that are attractive and highly readable	U	NU	Y	N
40.	Agency provides dependable and complete services	U	NU	Y	N
41.	Extent to which the reputation of the agency is tied to a specific person	U	NU	Y	N
42.	Program or agency is cost-efficient	U	NU	Y	N

Feel free to make suggestions on additional criteria or your comments in the space that follows.

43.	Direct costs of running program or agency	U	NU	Y	N
44.	Quality of courses or programs developed	U	NU	Y	N
45.	Match between programs developed and institutional priorities	U U	NU NU	Y Y	N N
46.	Extent of research conducted and reported	U	NU	Y	N

Go to next page.

		In Use		Should Be Used	
		Used	Not Used	Yes	No
47.	Cost-benefit of agency or program	U	NU	Y	N
48.	Effective as a networking device to identify and link resources and people	U	NU	Y	N
49.	Effectiveness of the administrative interventions conducted by agency	U	NU	Y	N
50.	Produces an increased concern for professional excellence in teachers and administrators	U	NU	Y	N
51.	Produces creative and effective products for national use	U	NU	Y	N
52.	Sensitivity to the needs and expectations of the state and federal governments	U	NU	Y	N
53.	Secures external funding for institutional projects	U	NU	Y	N
54.	Improves faculty/administrator relationships	U	NU	Y	N

Feel free to make suggestions on additional criteria or your comments in the space that follows.

Given the criteria rated above, choose the five (5) that you believe are most critical for determining the worth of your agency or program and write their corresponding numbers in the five spaces below. You are not required to rank these five criteria.

NOTES

[1]A protocol that a support unit can use to identify what criteria are being used to measure its success on its own campus will be found on pages

[2]A comprehensive discussion on project generation and selection will be found on pages 27-37, Instructional Development for Individualized Learning in Higher Education. Educational Technology Publications, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1975.

[3]Base data refers to that information that is collected before a project begins so that comparisons can be made after it is underway.